5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 MI Middle East
Bedouin MS4

spacious chafes his spirit and he looks with contempt and pity on the poor creatures that are willing to spend their days in the narrow confines of a town. This pity is for the cultivator and equally for the land-owner and the merchant, who so far worship their bodies that they will swathe them in silk and deck them with gold, a thing permissible for women, but contemptible for a man. The hardest work of the desert Arab is concerned with leading his flocks and with breaking up and repitching camp. As a result, he develops a great distaste for manual labor. He regards it as degrading, and no small amount of his dislike for life in a town rests on that fact. Digging up the ground, patiently caring for plants and crops, and all the work of the agriculturist he looks on as beneath him. Free men were created for something better than that.

It is the impression of a stranger to the country that not a blade of grass or a single date palm could be raised in all Arabia except in the oases where the gardeners work. The Arabs tell us that this is far from the truth. There are many places where water can be found close to the surface and where gardening could be carried on profitably. In connection with the *Akhwan* movement of puritan Wahabi Mohammedanism that has swept over all inland Arabia in the last few years, one of the efforts of the leaders has been to settle a certain number of the new converts in towns and villages. Altogether some sixty-five new settlements have been started since the inception of the movement. Doubtless most of these are very small, but there are a few of considerable size, and two or three are small cities of perhaps five thousand inhabitants. The Arabs insist that there are many other such places, where communities might spring up

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M54

if the Bedouins were willing to settle down to that sort of existence.

But the Bedouin, even though he knows of these places, does not care to give up his free desert life for the hard and disagreeable labor of the towns. He is faithful to his camels, and to his goats and sheep if he is fortunate enough to have them. He loves these animals and not one of them lacks a personal name. The little lambs and kids will be carried in his arms when the road is rocky or steep. The work of a cultivator, however, he hates, and he will nearly starve before descending to such a level as to engage in it. He looks down upon the townsmen with a lofty scorn and thinks of their hard labor as unworthy of men, fit rather for animals. This remarkable man regards himself as heaven's favorite, and he exhibits a contempt for the rest of the world and a satisfaction with himself and his life that would be sublime if they were not terribly pathetic.

Yet far from being ridiculous this Bedouin of the desert is one of the most splendid figures of our time. Out of that fearful poverty which amounts to constant semi-starvation, out of a lack of cleanliness that is continual degradation of the spirit, out of an isolation and an ignorance that make him a provincial in spite of himself, he stands as the world's supreme example of that Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that have been the dream of the ages. Tied down and limited by the lack of all material things, his spirit looks on them with indifference and cheerful contempt and pines away only when immersed in the obese and self-satisfied materialism of the town. He rises triumphant over his environment by the sheer strength of his spirit. Ignorant of all the wis-